

Measurements have been taken of the stage at the Lafayette, and there seems no doubt that there is room enough for the exhibition. All of the exhibitions take place in a circular steel cage covered with a strong net, so that there is no danger of accidents of any sort. The program is divided into ten parts, beginning with a collection of varicolored macaws and cuckatoos in "stunts" of a unique character. Then follow two Sumatra tigers that do equestrian feats on the back of a little Ceylon elephant. Trained pigs are tamed, and the mixed group of lions, tigers, leopards, bears, pumas, and Siamang hounds fourth. This act also includes the famous lion-tiger hybrid that attracted so much scientific attention in Europe. Educated goats with a clown trainer are followed by three clever trick horses and half a dozen dogs. Then comes a troupe of juggling seals and sea lions. The closing number is the first and only trained polar bear act ever brought to this country. This act concludes with the feeding of the bears from the naked hands of the trainer.

#### A Tight Musical Comedy.

"A Chinese Honeymoon," which appears for its initial performance in Washington at the Columbia Theater next week, is described as "one of those clean musical comedies that theatergoers will welcome as it is entirely different from musical comedies that have been seen here this season." The music of "A Chinese Honeymoon" is the work of Howard Talbert and the book and lyrics are from the pen of George Dance, among the numbers being "I Want to be a Lady," "Roly Poly," "The a la Girl," "Twiddle Twiddle," "The Official Mother-in-Law," "The Leader of Frocks and Frills," "Bits from the Plays," and "When Martha Spunk the Grand Piano." The company includes John E. Henshaw, Belle Harper, Clyde Claude, W. H. Prince, Ida Hawley, W. D. Clarke, May Ten Brock, Grace Vaughn, Edward Clark, Francis Knight, Geraldine Bruce, and a chorus of eight. A singular circumstance concerning "A Chinese Honeymoon" is that the book is free from suggestive lines and the costumes include neither tight nor short dresses.

#### "Go Won Go Mohawk."

For the week beginning Monday, January 5, the Academy offers the Indian actress, Go Won Go Mohawk, who will be remembered here for her excellent work several seasons ago. Her vehicle for this season, "The Flaming Arrow," is described as a play of much interest, and the cast is said to be an unusually capable one.

#### Creator Concert Next Sunday.

Creator and his band will give a single concert at the New National Theater Sunday night, January 4.

#### John Drew's New Play.

The initial performance here of John Drew's new play, "The Mummy and the Humming Bird," will be seen at the New National Theater Monday evening, January 5. The engagement will last for one week, and the sale of seats and boxes opens Thursday morning. The part of Lord Lumley, the deeply engrossed scientist, in which Charles Wyndham triumphed in London is said to suit Mr. Drew to a nicety, and affords him opportunity to duplicate his foreign brother-player's prosperity.

#### Royal First-Nighters.

When "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast," the Drury Lane extravaganza and ballet, which comes to the National Theater in January for a two weeks' stay, was originally done in London, it had as first-nighters no less distinguished personages than Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales, now the King of England. For the Queen's accommodation, a special box was erected in the center of the Drury Lane "pit." The present King of England remembered the building of the box, for he made a similar request when he attended the performance of "Ben Hur," at Drury Lane, a short while ago, so that he could get the full benefit of the "ree scene" in General Wallace's great play. The success of "The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast" in this country has been so pronounced, that another Drury Lane spectacle, "Bluebeard," is soon to be launched at the Knickerbocker Theater, New York.

#### Costumes for Miss Russell's Play.

"Mice and Men," in which Charles Frohman presents Annie Russell, is dated in 1786, a period offering splendid opportunities for quaintness in costume. At this time the dress of the women was not only picturesque but it was a favorable one for men. Powder was no longer de rigueur and wigs were worn close and short. Their suits might be of modest broadcloth, according to their condition, and of many agreeable hues;

or of rich brocade and satin should festivities require it. The frilled shirts had almost superseded the lace jabot and the three-cornered hat still had a vogue.

#### Burmese Football.

##### A Pastime of Great Interest Presented in Modern Vaudeville.

The national out-door sport of Burma is called "chinnone," and it has some points of similarity with football as played in America, and with cricket, the ancient and modern game of Merrie England. Unlike the western games, "chinnone" is played with every part of the body and head, the hands alone being barred from the contest. As a consequence, the native Burmese players attain a proficiency and dexterity in the use of their feet that seems incredible when only stated, and, indeed, is hard to believe when the game is played before the incredulous and inquiring.

There are in this country at the present time Burma's two most famous and expert "chinnone" players, whose popularity in their far-away land falls but little in degree behind the limit of popular adulation bestowed here in American upon Lajoie and Deleahanty, the present day giants of the baseball world.

They are Mung Toon and Mung Chet, the "mung" being the Burmese word for "mister," as applied in Occidental countries, and they will present themselves to the Washington public this week through the medium of polite vaudeville at Chase's; their tour of America, and their exhibition of "chinnone" being confined exclusively to the stage.

#### Present Strange Appearance.

With their long hair twisted in coils upon their heads and in their flowing silken robes they have, when first introduced, a strangely girlish look that only departs when they discard most of their garments preparatory to play. Then they stand forth in all the innocence of nature except for a breech cloth, handsome turbans, and marvelous tattooing overspreading their tawny skin from head to foot. Their earrings, it should be added, are almost large enough to be called a part of their coverings, as they are of uncommon size.

Mung Toon's earring holes in the lobes of his ears are so large that often he substitutes flowers for the golden trinkets, thus materially adding to the weird and fantastic appearance he usually presents. Both speak English

more or less imperfectly, as since the time of the bloody Thebaw in Burma it is a part of the English system of rule that the natives shall be required to study and speak the English language.

#### Not Rough, But Scientific.

The game of "chinnone" in itself bespeaks the wonderful dexterity of the two Oriental athletes who are proficient at it. It is not rough but extremely scientific, requiring years of practice before the muscles brought into use are sufficiently cultivated to enable the aspiring native to compete with the experts. The game is played occasionally by as many as five or six, but generally in every town in Burma there are two or three players so far ahead of any others that no one will compete against them. As the game is only played for money the reluctance of the less proficient to pit themselves against the professionals will readily be appreciated by western devotees of the seductive game of "draw poker." Indeed, it has been said of Burma that the natives know only two things, wooden gods and gold, and even the pursuit of the latter goal is confined to the Burmese wives who do the greater part of the business that is done there and then hand over the gains to their lords and masters to gamble away at "chinnone" and other Eastern devices by which the cunning profit by the inexperience of the unwary and inexperienced.

#### Balls of Wicker and Glass.

"Chinnone" is played with wicker or hollow glass balls, the former being made by the players themselves. The only tools and material employed in the manufacture of the wicker balls are paper, lemon, water, and a penknife. Bamboo cane is woven into shape round a wad of paper and afterward boiled in water, to which a piece of lemon has been added. The paper gives the cane the spherical shape, while the lemon has to stiffen the wicker so as to keep it in shape. After this the ball is left to dry for several days, and then the paper is extracted, leaving the ball hollow and springy.

The ball is put in play by any one of the competitors. It is sent into the air and it is the duty of the next man to catch it on some portion of his anatomy and send it flying into space again. The man who first fails in this loses the game.

After witnessing a contest one will be bound to marvel at the nimbleness of feet, the wonderfully sensitive muscles, and the dexterity displayed and called forth from the contestants. It is the chief rule of the game that the wicker

ball shall not, either in putting or sending, be touched by the hands, and the players so offending, or rather so incautious or inexperienced, commits a foul that loses him the game.

In overcoming this restriction, the Burmese "have developed that feature of "chinnone" that differentiates it from all other outdoor sports and that makes it much more difficult of mastery than the others. In a word, the foot has been taught by these native players to do the work of the hand, and right well that usually clumsy member acquires itself. And, too, when it comes to exercising the muscles of the entire body, "basketball" and "toss ball" of the American gymnasiums are not to be named in the same breath with the Burmese sport.

#### Many Muscles Trained.

Mung Toon and Mung Chet send the ball with as much ease from their shoulders, knees, heels, hips, heads, or any other part, as they do from their expressive pedal extremities. They have shoulder muscles so finely developed from constant practice that a slight twitch of them will send the wicker ball a height of several feet. They play with amazing rapidity and precision, and when the chance of a good strike does not present itself they catch the ball between the calf and thigh or back of the heel so cleverly that the beholder almost concludes that they have bewitched the ball into implicit obedience to their word of command. Often the ball will land on the shoulder and a dexterous twist of the head will detain it as securely as though it were fastened to the flesh. As the wicker bounds from one player to the other they are wrought up to a high pitch of pleasure and excitement and their yellow bodies and lithe limbs flash from place to place and round side to side with all the speed of gold fishes darting in a glass aquarium.

Both Mung Toon and Mung Chet, although not formidable in appearance, are covered with finely drawn, delicate muscles, which are the result of years steadily devoted to their national game. While it would seem that great power were required to manipulate the ball in midair for any length of time, these two Orientals can keep it at for an hour without any perceptible exertion.

#### Must Practice Every Day.

Every day they practice before going through the exhibition in public. Only this incessant drilling enables them to retain that perfect skill which is yielding the wealth they are rapidly accumulating. Mung Toon, who is the better player of the two, is a juggler as

well. He uses glass balls, hollow inside, similar to those used to adorn Christmas trees. He manipulates these in a bewildering manner, and, despite their fragile nature, seldom smashes one. One feat in his repertory required fifteen years of patient practice before it was mastered. One glass ball is caught on the shoulder and held there. The other, which has been describing all sorts of curves, is sent up from his knees. As it descends Mung Toon gets under it and it alights directly on top of the stationary blown-glass sphere on his shoulder. It is received so delicately and the balancing is so perfect that the under ball does not smash, nor does the top one leave its uncertain base until the skillful Indian voluntarily starts it in motion again.

#### Ada Rehan to Reappear.

NEW YORK, Dec. 24.—This week only one new play has been known at the theaters, but next Monday night Mrs. Langtry will appear in a play called "Cross Ways," at the Garrick, and the first performance of George Ade's comic opera, "The Sultan of Sulu," will begin at Wallack's. E. H. Sothern follows Tuesday in "Hamlet," at the Garden. Mrs. Fiske in "Mary of Magdala," continues to draw large audiences to the Manhattan Theater, where seats are being secured for a month in advance. It is manifest that this drama, aside from its appeal to habitual playgoers and to those unfamiliar with the theater, is proving to be an exceedingly strong holiday attraction. Mrs. Fiske's impersonation of Mary stands on a plane above any of her previous notable characterizations, and is most effective. As a production the play is wonderfully impressive in its artistic detail. The various pictures presented resemble quaint canvases by masters, and the realistic storm scene in the last act thrills every audience that sits under its spell. Within a week several rather remarkable tributes have been paid to the Heyze drama. One came from the Rev. Ernest M. Stires, rector of St. Thomas' Church, who at the meeting of a clergymen's association advised his colleagues to see it. Mrs. Fiske has decided to continue the play for the remainder of the season. "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" is a success at the New York theater and promises to have a profitable run. The piece is in some respects novel, in that old and popular songs are introduced with telling effect. "Down on the Swanne River," goes with a burrah and is encored many times. Klaw & Erlanger are arranging a

tour for Miss Ada Rehan, who returns to the stage at an early date in a new play by Haddon Chambers. Not long ago Miss Rehan announced her retirement, and as it was known that she possessed a handsome fortune the announcement was believed. But it is the old, old story. "Actors die, but they never retire." Our Ada is in excellent health and spirits, and if her play is good for anything, she should give an excellent account of herself.

The return of this actress to the stage reminds me that there are rumors of

an early reappearance before the public of Minna Gale (now Mrs. Haynes), for several years the leading woman of the Booth and Barrett combination. Last week Mrs. Haynes gave a matinee performance of "The Lady of Lyons" at the Garrick Theater, and it is doubtful if a more delightful impersonation of Pauline has been seen on the stage in years. As Minna Gale Mrs. Haynes was always considered a beautiful woman, and when she married and retired it was thought that the stage had lost its most promising actress. NANCY SYKES.

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